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The life of the world to come

Henry Barclay Swete

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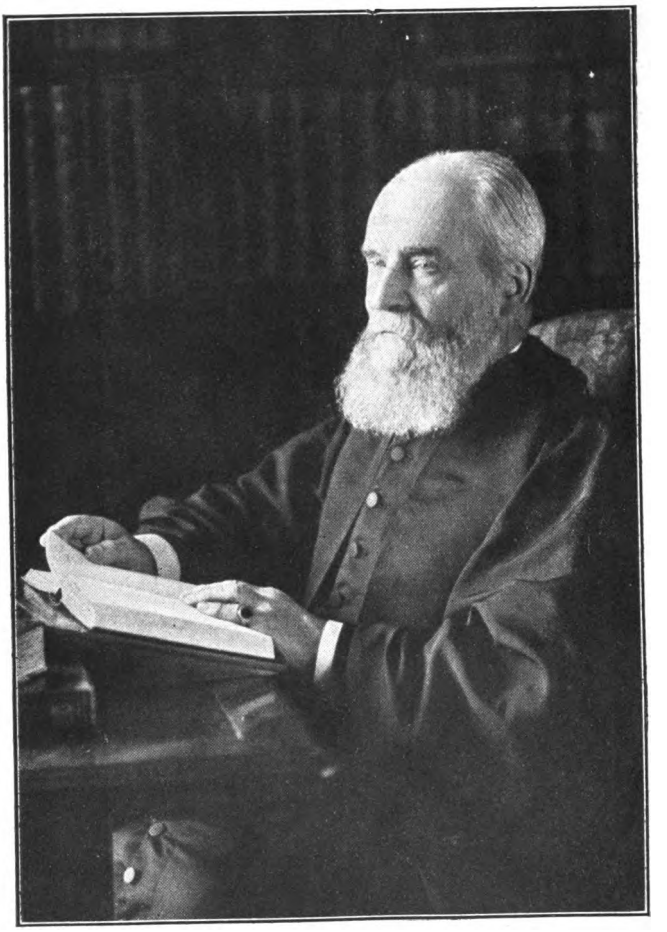
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Photo, Elliott & Fry.

Yours very sincerely

H. B. Swete

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THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME

SIX ADDRESSES

GIVEN BY THE LATE

HENRY BARCLAY SWETE
D.D., D.LITT., F.B.A.
EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, CAMBRIDGE
FELLOW OF GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
HON. CANON OF ELY; HON. CHAPLAIN TO THE KING

WITH A PORTRAIT

"An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

SEVENTH THOUSAND

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
LONDON: 68, HAYMARKET, S.W.
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1918

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I LOOK FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD,
AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME.

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CH
.SW4

To

THE FRIENDS AND FELLOW MEMBERS OF
THE CHURCH AT HITCHIN,

TO WHOM HE CONSTANTLY SPOKE AND MINISTERED,

AND WHO GAVE HIM IN RETURN

GOODWILL AND RESPECTFUL AFFECTION,

THESE ADDRESSES

ARE DEDICATED BY THE

DESIRE OF

HENRY BARCLAY SWETE

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PREFACE

THESE six addresses on the "Life of the World to Come" were given by Dr. Swete at Hitchin on the Friday afternoons of last Lent in the Trinity Chapel of St. Mary's Church. After their delivery he was asked to print them, but declined on the ground that they were too slight. Had he been spared to live longer his intention was to complete his series of books on the Apostles' Creed by a volume on "The Life Everlasting," for which he had made some preliminary studies, and this he doubtless had in mind when he gave this Lenten course. It was his custom to prepare for a book by lecturing or, as in this case, speaking on the subject until it grew and crystallized into its final shape. These addresses were written in full with all his customary care and pains, and, after his wont, they were completed some time before he was to deliver the first. To him such ministry of the Word was a matter of the first moment; and

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if he deemed these particular addresses "slight," they were so intentionally, not because he had been hurried or grudged pains in their preparation. Those who heard them greatly appreciated them, and many were comforted in a time of sore trial. As he lay dying he gave me permission to print them for his "Hitchin friends." He had made his home at Hitchin after his resignation of the Regius Professorship of Divinity at Cambridge, and the eighteen months of his residence here were among some of the happiest in his life. He delighted in his garden, his library, his home, but specially did he love the parish church, and it was a great joy that he could minister in it. The churchpeople of Hitchin had in return shewed him no common appreciation and affection. One of them writes of this very course: "I shall always think of Dr. Swete as I saw him during those wonderful Lenten addresses which he gave us. He was so beautiful, sitting there in the sanctuary with the lamp shining on his face. And it seems fitting that his last words should be on the Life Hereafter. We shall miss him very much." The last address was given within a week of the begin-

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ning of his illness. He fell asleep on May 10, 1917; and by his own request his body was laid to rest in Hitchin.

If this little book cannot take a place among my uncle's fuller and more finished works, it reflects at least his serene faith in our sure and certain hope, and an eventide radiant with light and peace.

M. B. K.

HITCHIN,
July, 1917.

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IMMORTALITY

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THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME

I

IMMORTALITY

THE words "immortal," "immortality," are used in two different senses, according as they are applied to God or to man.

God is immortal in the sense that He cannot die. In the infinite life there can be no death, no decay, no dissolution, no change. God "only hath immortality"[1] such as this.

Man is immortal in the sense that there is in him that which does not die. His body dies, but his soul survives. It lives on after it has left the body. His identity is not lost when he dies; his true self, the ultimate being and personality of the man, remains as it was before death. He can die, he will surely die; but he will not go out like the snuff of a candle. Not all of him dies; there is a part of him, and by far the more essential

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 16.

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part, which is immortal, which defies and outlives death.

This is not merely the teaching of the Bible, not simply the doctrine of the Church. In fact, the Bible and the Church have little to say about the immortality of man. There was no need to say much, for it had been said before the Bible was written or the Church founded. That the human soul outlives death was taught in Egypt before Jacob and his sons went down into that country, and in Babylonia before Abraham went out of Ur. The great civilizations of those ancient days recognized this truth; it was part of their religion, as it is part of ours. In fact, the Egyptians of two or three thousand years before Christ evidently thought more about the life of the soul after death than most of us Christians do now. Christianity has something better to offer; how much better we shall understand if we first ask ourselves what kind of immortality the old heathen religions of the world promised to their adherents.

Let us begin with Egypt. Our records go back to the fifth millennium before our era; the mind aches to think of so long a retrospect. Even then belief in the survival of the soul was shewn by the provision made for the wants of the dead, bread and drink and all that made life possible

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or comfortable being placed in the tomb within reach of the deceased. Later on, but still from two to three thousand years before Christ, we get full accounts of the life of the dead in their new place of abode. It lies somewhere in the West, towards the setting sun. Over it presides the god Osiris, who himself underwent death, and was restored to life, and now is ruler and judge of the souls of the departed. Each soul that comes under his power is judged by Osiris and forty-two other gods, his assessors. The whole process of judgement is described in the *Book of the Dead.* The soul is brought before the judge in the great Hall of Judgement, and permitted to plead its cause. It does so by counting up all its good deeds, and protesting its innocence from every form of sin. But this is not enough to satisfy the gods; the man's heart is placed in the scales of justice and weighed, and he is rewarded or punished according to the result. The soul that is not found wanting lives henceforth with the gods in heaven. "Thou shalt live," it is said to a soul that has passed through death, "for millions of millions of years." For some reason which is not very clear, the preservation of the body was thought necessary to the welfare of the soul, and it was for this cause apparently that the dead were converted into mummies. An

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Egyptian mummy, as we see it now in our museums, is a touching witness to the expectation of immortality, the craving for a future life which all Egyptians felt, from Pharaoh to the meanest of his people.

When we pass from the valley of the Nile to the other great seat of ancient civilization, on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, a very different conception of the life after death meets us. The Babylonians thought of the abode of the dead as a vast cavernous underworld, where the light of day is never seen, and the inhabitants sit in darkness and feed on dust, guarded by gods or demons of forbidding appearance. There is no escape from this gloomy prison; there is no judge and no differentiation between the evil and the good. Still, the picture, gloomy as it is, represents the soul as surviving death; with the Egyptians the Babylonians believed in immortality, although it was such that extinction would surely have been preferable. The Babylonian religion had neither a heaven nor a hell, yet it did not hold the cheerless creed which many hold now, that this life is all.

Greek religion spoke about the dead with a more uncertain voice. In Homer the dead are the mere shadows of their former selves. They are "alive enough," it has been said, "to feel

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that they are dead," yet "hardly dead enough to forget they are alive." The whole picture of the future life as it is drawn in the earliest Greek poetry is "one of totally unrelieved gloom." Later on, another and a more hopeful, if not a truer, picture is drawn of the departed. The idea gained ground in Hellas that the body is a prison-house from which the soul joyfully makes its escape. The soul, it was said, is immortal because of its affinity to God. But its destiny depends on its conduct while it is in the body. Guilty souls pay the penalty of their sins; the good pass to the islands of the blest. The great Greek poets of the classical age vary much in their presentation of the state of the departed. Of Æschylus, perhaps the greatest of them, Bishop Westcott writes: "Æschylus has not one word of true hope for a future state; for him the other world, and the powers by which it is governed, exist only for the guilty." He dares not deny that the soul survives death, but he thinks only of punishment in connexion with the life to come. Sophocles makes Antigone say in the prospect of death:

"But a good hope I cherish that, come there,
My father's love will greet me, yea, and thine,
My mother, and thy welcome, brother dear."

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Euripides is, on the whole, an agnostic on the subject of the future life. Once he asks :

> "Who knows if life is death,
> And death is counted life by those below?"

But at other times he expresses a doubt whether there is any life beyond the grave, and even the wish that there may be none.

And Greek philosophy on the whole followed the hesitating tone of Greek poetry. Even Socrates, on the eve of his martyrdom, regards immortality as one of two alternatives. Death is *either* extinction and annihilation, *or* it opens to us another life. Either event, Socrates thinks, is good ; for in the former case, there is an end of toil and care, and the dead enter on an eternal, dreamless sleep ; in the latter, we go to join the company of all the great and good who have gone before us. God only, he concludes, knows which of these two destinies is to be ours. And so he passed away to a future still uncertain. His pupil, Plato, treads on firmer ground. Death is for him merely the separation of soul and body. But that separation is, for the soul that has lived well, a release from imprisonment. It will not only survive the dissolution of partnership, but gains thereby. The soul carries with it nothing but its education. But with this it can pursue its path of purification, until at last it returns

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to God from Whom it came forth. This is a doctrine of immortality which falls indeed far short of the Christian ideal, but is greatly superior to the Egyptian view. In Plato's scheme of things, the present life is a real preparation for the next, and the next, if the preparation has been sound and good, leads the soul up to its final rest in God.

Rome inherited the poetry and the philosophy of Greece, but with a difference. The old Roman religion, which was the guide of the masses, made much of a certain belief in immortality. Family worship at Rome was largely concerned with the cult of the Manes, the shades of departed ancestors. There were yearly festivals of the dead; the *Parentalia* in February, the birthdays of departed relatives, as they came round. Thrice in the year an aperture was made in the tombs, that the shades might come out and visit again the world of the living. To these ancient rites the Roman poets added belief in the myths of the Greek religion: Styx, Tartarus, the Elysian fields, all took their place in the Roman creed. But there were other teachers abroad who spread a widely different attitude of mind, throwing doubt not only on the mythical stories, but also on the hope of a future life; and these sceptics gained the hearing of the educated

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Roman and destroyed his faith in the old religions. Philosophy, too, as it was taught at Rome, was largely sceptical. The two chief schools, the Stoics and the Epicureans, did little to help belief in immortality; the Epicureans altogether abandoned the hope of a future life; the Stoics spoke with an uncertain voice. Seneca, the contemporary of S. Paul, could only venture on the hypothesis, "if there be any sense or feeling after death." The life beyond was to him no more than a pleasant dream, in which he sometimes indulged, but which vanished, as dreams do, when he was roused by the realities of outward life.

To this gloomy view of the attitude of the Roman world towards the doctrine of immortality, it is only fair to add that about the Christian era Rome was flooded by new religions from the East, which encouraged the hope of a future life. The Orphic mystery-religion from Greece, the religions of Isis from Egypt, of the Great Mother from Phrygia, of Mithra from Persia, gained numerous followers at Rome and throughout the Empire. Mithraism in particular became a serious rival of Christianity, and was almost universal among Roman soldiers. But it was after all a vague and poor hope that these religions offered, and one which had little if any

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influence on life, less than philosophy, which, even when it denied the life to come, strove to make life on earth better, and to some extent succeeded in the attempt.

On the whole, then, S. Paul does not exaggerate the evil case of the heathen world of his time when he says[1] that the Gentiles had no hope, and were without God in the world. The hopelessness of life with no assured prospect of immortality, with no gospel of a world to come, is almost inconceivable to us who have probably never doubted our immortality. But to S. Paul, wherever he went, into the Greek cities of Asia Minor, to Athens and Corinth, or to Rome itself, the terrible words "without hope" seemed to be inscribed on all the men and women he met, on the daily life, on the businesses and amusements of life, and above all on death. No hope worth calling by that name; much wealth, splendid buildings, great works of art, a great literature, a great Empire, much gaiety of heart, but no hope beyond the fleeting years of an uncertain lifetime. Thirty, fifty, eighty, a hundred years of this, and then, for all they knew, the light went out, and darkness set in, with no to-morrow. The hopelessness of life was far more accentuated in the first century of our era than it had been two

[1] Eph. ii. 12.

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or three millenniums before Christ. In Egypt, under the Pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom, no doubt was entertained of the survival of the soul after death; at Rome, under the Cæsars, the educated classes had lost faith in their own immortality. The world, as it grew older, grew less hopeful, or abandoned hope altogether.

Then the Gospel came and changed all this. Jesus Christ, S. Paul says, "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."[1] The words are carefully chosen, and do not overstate the truth. It is not said that our Lord brought the doctrine of immortality into the world; that He was the author or first preacher of the doctrine. He was not, as we have seen; the great heathen civilizations all had the doctrine centuries before He came. But it was a dim and uncertain hope at the best, and as the ages went on, it grew dimmer and seemed about to fade away altogether, leaving the world to the blackness of despair. Then Christ came, and He illuminated the hope; He threw the strong searchlight of His teaching and His life upon our common life, and on our prospect of immortality. He lit them up with the glory of the Incarnation and the Cross and the empty tomb; and men saw and believed and hoped afresh.

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 10.

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The New Testament, the record of the first age of Christianity, is full of this fresh hope. Let me remind you of some of the great things said about it. "We rejoice," S. Paul says, "in the hope of the glory of God."[1] Our hope is one which will not put us to shame by failing us at the last. "We were saved by hope."[2] "We were called in one hope of our calling."[3] "Our hope is laid up for us in heaven."[4] It is our helmet which protects the head of the Christian soldier.[5] Our hope is Christ Himself; Christ in us is "the hope of glory."[6] It is a hope, S. John adds, which rests on him.[7] It is, according to S. Peter,[8] a "living hope," a hope, that is, into which a new life has been breathed—not a dead conventional form of words, but a power which works and rules within the man who has it.

But this new Christian hope, how enormously it has outgrown the best hopes of the heathen world. It is no mere survival of the soul after death that Christ and the Apostles teach. Indeed, they do not speak at all of any natural inherent power in the soul to survive. There may be such an innate power, or there may be not: that is left for philosophy and science to

[1] Rom. v. 2. [2] Rom. viii. 24. [3] Eph. iv. 4.
[4] Col. i. 5. [5] 1 Thess. v. 8. [6] Col. i. 27.
[7] 1 John iii. 3. [8] 1 Pet. i. 3.

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determine; it does not belong to the Gospel to answer questions of this kind. The immortal life which the Gospel proclaims is supernatural, the gift of God to us in His Son Jesus Christ. "He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."[1] The life is "Christ *in* us," living in us by His Spirit, raising us up and uniting us to His own life in the heavenly places. It includes, therefore, the resurrection of the body in such a form as may best serve the purposes of the spirit. "I am," the Lord said, "the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."[2] The Eucharist, in which we spiritually feed on the Body and Blood of Christ, is His pledge to us that He will preserve both soul and body unto eternal life. "He that eateth my flesh (He says), and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."[3] The believer, the devout communicant, "hath eternal life" already; immortality has begun in him, in the new life of the Spirit. Christ "will raise him up at the last day," when his immortality will be completed and crowned by the new life of the body.

[1] John v. 12. [2] John xi. 25, 26. [3] John vi. 54

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This is immortality indeed, that perfect victory of life over death after which men had been feeling in the days when the Pyramids were young. It was the mere shadow of the reality which they grasped, and even this they were losing their hold upon, when the Gospel brought the true immortality to light.

One more point. Our Lord not only illuminated the future life, but he gave in His own person a guarantee of its certainty. The Gentile hope faded, because it had no better foundation than the *ipse dixit* of a great teacher, or the intuition of primitive man. With the evidence before him Socrates was justified in refusing to decide definitely between survival and annihilation. His hopes and wishes were evidently with the former, but the latter was a possible alternative. There was as yet no positive demonstration of human immortality.

Jesus Christ has demonstrated the great fact in His own person: by rising from the dead in our nature He has shewn not only that the human soul can survive death, but that death itself can be conquered and destroyed; and thus, for those who believe Him to have been the second Adam, the quickening spirit of our race, He has done far more than demonstrate the possibility of a resurrection; He is Himself the first fruits of

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the great harvest of the risen dead. "Since by man came death, by man has also come the resurrection of the dead; as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."[1] Immortality is no longer a hope only, but a sure and certain hope; a hope, too, which embraces the whole man, which promises to preserve body, soul, and spirit in their completeness to the day of Christ.

We are living in days when we need a great revival of the Christian hope. Death is busy in our midst carrying off the young and strong, taking a heavy toll of the best and bravest of the rising generation. In many a household life has grown grey and cheerless; earthly hopes are dead. What if they are taken away from us in order that the immortal heavenly hope may spring up afresh? For us Christians the guess of the old Greek poet is solid fact: *death is life*. It is so for those who have gone from us to be with Christ; it will be so for ourselves when we follow. It will be so in the fullest sense when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, and this mortal shall put on immortality.

Sursum corda. Habemus ad Dominum. We lift them up unto the Lord, who is the Resurrection and the Life. He is our immortality.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 21.

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THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

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II

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

THE common sense of humanity declares that the soul survives death, and lives on without the body. But where is this separate life of the soul lived, and under what conditions? I have to some extent indicated the answer given to these questions by the ancient civilizations in Egypt, in Babylonia, in Greece, and at Rome. To-day we will consider the answer given in the sacred books of the Church—the Old Testament and the New.

1. The Old Testament is a history of the life and thought of the people of Israel in the centuries before Christ. We can trace in it, among other things, the growth of the religion of Israel from the earliest times. From Ur in South Babylonia, and from Haran, further to the north, Abraham brought with him to Canaan, we may suppose, in the main the religion of his fathers, and it was but gradually that fuller light came as the reward of his faith. In some vague way, we must suppose, the patriarchs looked beyond their earthly inheritance to a heavenly.

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Jacob, we are told by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "looked for the city that hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God."[1] And the same, no doubt, is true of Abraham and Isaac and Joseph: they confessed that they were strangers and sojourners upon earth; they desired a better country than the land of Canaan, and God prepared it for them. Long after their deaths, as our Lord teaches, He was still their God, and they were "living unto Him."[2] But in all this they were better than their creed, the religion which they brought with them from their Mesopotamian home. Like the Babylonians, the Hebrews entertained the most gloomy views of the state of the dead. They thought of the abode of the dead as an underworld, which they called Sheol, a hollow cavern tenanted by the fleshless spirits of all generations. It is sometimes translated in our English Bible by "the grave," sometimes by "the pit"; sometimes the name "Sheol" is left by the reviser untranslated. But though the conception of Sheol is doubtless borrowed from the rock-tombs which were used in Palestine for burial, or the grave-pits dug by the poorer class, it is not the grave or tomb which holds the body that is intended in any of these passages which speak

[1] Heb. xi. 10. [2] Luke xx. 36.

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of Sheol, but the abode of the departed soul Of this abode terrible things are said even in some of the Psalms and in other late books of the Old Testament. The dead in Sheol are remembered no more ; they are cut off from God's hand ;[1] they lie in dark places, in the deep ; their thoughts perish. "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence."[2] "In death there is no remembrance of Thee ; in Sheol who shall give Thee thanks ?"[3] So good and true an Israelite as King Hezekiah spoke of death in this language of despair : "The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee : they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth."[4] Sometimes the despair suggests the thought of annihilation. "O spare me a little," prays one of the Psalmists, "before I go hence, and be no more seen,"[5] the Prayer-Book Psalter has it ; but "seen" is not in the original. "The dead know not anything," exclaims the Preacher, "neither have they any more a reward."[6] "When a few years are gone," Job complains, "I shall go the way whence I shall not return."[7] And again : "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down,

[1] Ps. lxxxviii. 5. [2] Ps. cxv. 17. [3] Ps. vi. 5.
[4] Is. xxxviii. 18. [5] Ps. xxxix. 13. [6] Eccl. ix. 5.
[7] Job xvi. 22.

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that it will sprout again, . . . but man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"[1] "Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake; . . . if a man die, shall he live again?"[2] The meaning of Job xix. 25 *ff.* is too doubtful to justify the use of this passage as evidence for ultimate hope of a resurrection. "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest."[3] So the preacher settles the whole question of man's destiny. Sheol ends all.

This hopelessness of some of the later books of the old Testament (for Job and Ecclesiastes are both relatively late, Ecclesiastes more especially so) is very striking—I may say startling. Contrasted with the bright hopes of the Gospel, contrasted even with some of the nearly contemporary utterances of Greek poets and philosophers, these despairing cries from the land of Israel, the home of God's covenant people, are unexpected and discomposing; they shew that on the subject of the future life the Hebrew people had on the whole but little light even down to the fourth century before Christ. But there are exceptions; here and there in the Psalms and the Prophets a bright sunbeam is shot across the darkness, as the Holy Spirit

[1] Job xiv. 7, 10. [2] Job xiv. 12, 14. [3] Eccl. ix. 10.

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moves some saintly Israelite to anticipate the coming day. Take, for example, one or two passages from the Psalms, when the Psalmists seem to expect for the righteous either deliverance from Sheol or a blessed fellowship with God within the prison of the dead. "My heart is glad . . . my flesh also shall rest in hope, for Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol . . . Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."[1] "As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."[2] "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol: for He shall receive me."[3] "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. . . . My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."[4] We can use such passages in the Psalter in the Christian sense, but we must not suppose that in writing them the Psalmists had before them the full Christian hope. One cannot be sure of the precise meaning which they attached to their own words. But at least they expressed their conviction that souls which had had happy fellowship with God on earth would

[1] Ps. xvi. 9 *ff.*
[2] Ps. xvii. 15.
[3] Ps. xlix. 15.
[4] Ps. lxxiii. 24, 26.

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not lose this fellowship, or the happiness it brought them, in Sheol, but rather, with the awaking of the spirit after death, would realize and enjoy the presence of God far more fully than in the days of the flesh.

The Prophets occasionally go beyond this, foretelling a resurrection from the dead. Some of these prophecies, when they are examined, prove to be concerned with the moral and spiritual resurrection of the nation. Such is clearly Ezekiel's prophecy of the valley of dry bones; such, too, is Hosea's "After two days will He revive us: on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him."[1] Even Hosea's later words, "I will ransom them from the power of Sheol; I will redeem them from death: O death, where are thy plagues? O Sheol, where is thy destruction?"[2] refer, primarily at least, to the deliverance of Israel from national death, from the grave of its lost hopes and ideals.

On the other hand, a remarkable section of Isaiah (chapters xxiv.-xxvii), which is possibly later even than the second Isaiah, and post-exilic, does seem to contemplate the resurrection of the body: "He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that is cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

[1] Hosea vi. 2. [2] Hosea xiii. 14.

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He hath swallowed up death for ever. . . . Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead."[1] It is, however, only in Daniel, the latest book of the Old Testament, written probably about 168 B.C., that we find a definite prediction of a resurrection both of the good and the evil. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt."[2]

The Old Testament, then, notwithstanding the pessimism of some even of its later writers, anticipates the Christian hope in two respects: (*a*) it speaks of increased fellowship with God in Sheol, and (*b*) it foresees the ultimate deliverance from Sheol by the resurrection of the body.

2. It is the latter of these hopes which is chiefly in view in the New Testament. The Resurrection shines out brightly both in the Gospels and in the Acts and Epistles; of the state of the departed we hear but little either from our Lord or from the Apostles. For some reason or other a veil is drawn over the world of spirits, and it is rarely raised. The attempt which is now being made in some quarters to open up

[1] Isa. xxv. 7, 8; xxvi. 19. [2] Dan. xii. 2.

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communication with the dead is wholly foreign to the mind of the New Testament. The Old Testament has one instance of such a proceeding—the bringing up of Samuel the prophet by the witch of Endor—but it is evidently disapproved, and necromancy was strictly prohibited by the law. If our Lord had desired to remove this prohibition and encourage the methods of spiritualism, nothing could have been easier. But He was so far from this that even when He recalled the dead to life, He seems to have sealed their lips against any revelations of the other world. Lazarus sat at table after his resurrection with Jesus, but not a word passed, so far as we know, which threw light on the mystery of death. Nor, we may be sure, had the daughter of Jairus or the widow's son at Nain any tale of life in Hades to tell their relations and friends in Galilee. Had they been able to do this, how eagerly would tradition have seized upon their words; how surely would such disclosures have survived!

Once—twice—our Lord does Himself draw aside the veil for an instant: (1) In the parable of the rich man and Larazus we see the soul of the beggar in Abraham's bosom—*i.e.*, reclining next to Abraham at a banquet—a sharp contrast to his lying at the rich man's gate, asking for

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the crumbled bread that was thrown to the dogs. The picture represents poverty exchanged for plenty, hardness for ease, neglect for honour. Again, to the penitent highwayman on the cross, who asked to be remembered when Jesus came into His Kingdom, the Lord answered: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."[1] Instead of the wood of the Cross, the trees of the Garden of God; instead of the fever-thirst of the crucified, the river of the water of life. And in what company? "With me." And when? "Not when I come into my Kingdom, in days long distant; but this day, the day of thy death." The beggar's rest in Abraham's bosom, the robber's rest in the Garden of God, are not postponed to the Resurrection, but follow death at once.

"To-day thou shalt be with me." Jesus, then, was going that day to Paradise. He and the penitent had been together on Golgotha, and would be together in the Garden of the Lord. Jesus at His death went into the state of the dead. "He descended," as the Creed has it, "into Hell"—into Hades, as the Greeks called it, into Sheol, as the old Hebrews would have said. And lo! it was no longer Hell or Sheol, no longer a dark cavernous prison, but a Garden, the Garden

[1] Luke xxiii. 43.

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of happy souls, the Garden of the Lord. It was no longer a prison-house from which there was no escape, but the ante-chamber of Heaven, the waiting-place of souls expecting their resurrection. "He went and preached to the spirits in prison,"[1] and converted their prison into a place of liberty and joyful hope.

It was the descent of Jesus Christ into Hades which made it what it has become to the Church. He "descended into Hell"; and from that hour a new light broke upon the darkness, not enough to answer all our questionings, not enough to satisfy our curiosity, but enough to deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage; enough to make death to all sincere Christians the gate of life, the entrance into rest, the entrance into a state which is far better than our best here.

The reserve about the state of the departed which we have noticed in the Gospels continues in the Epistles. It was the hope of the Second Coming and the Resurrection that inspired the members of the primitive Church rather than the hope of Paradise. Moreover, the Second Coming seemed to them so near at hand, and they felt at times so confident that they were "being left"[2] on earth for its arrival, that the Lord would

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 19. [2] 1 Thess. iv. 17

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return and raise His saints within their own generation, that little attention was paid to the present state of the dead in Christ, seeing it was so soon to end in the kingdom of glory. Still, the Epistles are not wholly silent on this subject, and what they do say deserves our best consideration.

Let us take first the opening verses of 2 Cor. v. At the end of chapter iv. S. Paul has said that Christians aim not at the visible and transitory, but at the invisible and eternal. Their outward man may decay, but the inward man of the spirit is being renewed from day to day. Then he proceeds—I am paraphrasing his words—"Our earthly house, this mortal body, is a mere tent, which must be taken down and packed up when we move on. But there awaits us another house, a spiritual body, which is now in heaven, in the purpose of God, and which, being invisible, is eternal. In our present mortal body we often groan, and long for the day when the heavenly body, our permanent home, will descend upon us at the coming of the Lord, and our mortality shall be clothed and swallowed up by the resurrection life. In that case we shall not be stripped of our present body, and left naked souls; the new body will instantly replace our mortal flesh; we shall not die, but be changed.

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We are assured of that by the work of the Spirit upon our hearts, for the Spirit in the heart is the earnest of the complete spiritualizing of the whole man.

"But what if we should not live to see the coming of the Lord, or to be clothed, without death, by the spiritual body? What then? Still we are confident, we are content. Death, though we do not choose it—though we would choose to be changed, and not to die—death will be better for us than life in this mortal body. For here we are absent from the Lord; there we shall be present with Him. Here we are away from home; there we shall be at home with the Lord. Our only anxiety is that, whether in the body or out of the body, we may be pleasing to Him."

This is an extraordinarily interesting passage, because in it we see S. Paul struggling with the thought that he might have to die, and remain in the state of the dead until the Lord's return. He shrinks from the thought, but acquiesces when he reflects that death will bring him into the presence of Christ, which the mortal body hinders him from realizing.

Some years passed by, and the Apostle, now a prisoner at Rome, and conscious that he might not leave Rome alive, again weighs the comparative advantage of life and death. The

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passage occurs in Philippians i. Again I will use a paraphrase:

"Saints at Philippi, with your bishops and deacons, things are going well here in Rome for the Gospel of Christ. I am a prisoner, but my imprisonment has had the effect of bringing the Name of Jesus Christ to the knowledge of the whole prætorian guard, into whose keeping I have been delivered. I may live or I may die; what does it matter if the Name of Jesus Christ is magnified? To me life is Christ and death is gain. If I have to choose between the two I scarce know what my choice would be; for your sakes I should elect to live, but the desire is strong within me to break up my camp and go home to be with Christ; for that is very far better."

If we compare this passage in Philippians with the passage from 2 Corinthians, we shall find that while they differ in one respect, they agree closely in another. They differ in this, that while, in writing to the Corinthians in or about the year 55, S. Paul still on the whole expected to live to the coming of the Lord, he had practically abandoned that hope when he wrote, five or six years after, to the Church at Philippi. He now looks forward to death, if not at once, yet eventually; and he does not shrink from the

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prospect. On the other hand, the two Epistles agree completely as to the state of the Christian dead. They are "absent from the body," but "present," "at home," "with the Lord." They are "with Christ," which is "very far better" than being in the body.

Here, then, is the one contribution which S. Paul makes to our knowledge of life after death. The dead in Christ are "with Christ." Let us consider what those two words mean. The Twelve were "with Christ"[1] during the ministry in Galilee. The risen saints will be "with Christ," the risen and ascended Christ, in the heavenly Kingdom. But how can the dead, the spirits of the departed, be with Him in Paradise? The case of the penitent robber on the cross is not in point, for when our Lord said to him, "Thou shalt be with me," He was Himself about to descend into Hades, and His human spirit was there during the interval between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection; but at the Resurrection it left Hades and rejoined His body, and in the risen body ascended to the Father. How, then, can he be still with the spirits of the dead?

In a sense He is with us here on earth. We have His word for it: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[2] We

[1] Mark iii. 14. [2] Matt. xxviii. 20.

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believe in the real presence of Jesus Christ with His Church, in the Eucharist, and in the whole life of faith. But this Presence which we have here is absence when compared with His Presence with those who have died in faith. I should not dare to say this if S. Paul had not said it: "whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord." He does not mean, of course, that we are really absent from Him, but that we do not and cannot realize His presence. But we shall realize it when we come to leave the body. It will still be a spiritual presence; S. Paul does not say that we shall see the Lord; that is reserved for the risen body, with its new faculty of vision; but he says that we shall be consciously and constantly with him—as consciously, as constantly as the Twelve were in Galilee, only as spirits with Spirit. There is nothing more than this in Heaven itself, except that there we shall "see Him as He is":[1] "so shall we ever be with the Lord"[2] is the utmost that the Apostle can say of life after the resurrection, and (but for the word "ever") he says the same of the faithful departed.

What must be the effect of this realized Presence on those who live in it? Surely the first

[1] 1 John iii. 2. [2] 1 Thess. iv. 17.

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and the greatest will be *purification*. "He that is near Me," our Lord is reported to have said, "is near the fire." It is the fire of love; but it will burn up, we may believe, all the imperfections which cling to the saints even to the hour of their departure hence, and which, so far as we can judge (since death cannot change character), must pass over with them into the unseen world. If there is a purgatory there, it is not what the Middle Ages imagined, a fire of *penal* suffering; but it is the all-holy presence of Jesus Christ, in which all that is not holy must melt away and vanish. Another effect, we cannot doubt, will be the *perfecting* of this spirit in knowledge and love, and in all the moral image of God. If life here in the Church is of the nature of an education for the life to come, it is but the school which prepares for the higher education which is to follow. The higher education of the soul is to be found in the presence of the great Master with those who wait in the unseen world for His coming and their rising again. With this may go our training for the higher service of the great future; for we cannot suppose that the conscious life of the vast majority of Christ's servants is spent in inactivity; they are surely serving Him while they wait; and by serving there, they learn to serve in ways far beyond our

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imagination, when the day of Christ brings these new powers and opportunities.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." "They rest from their labours,"[1] for work in Paradise is not labour. Their works follow with them; not one is forgotten or without the promise of reward. So says the Revelation of S. John, which paints in bright colouring their present life. But it is S. Paul who has seized upon the supreme felicity of the blessed dead. They are "with Christ," with Him who Himself was dead and now lives, who has the keys of Hades and of death, who will be with His saints there, and in due time will call them forth, purified and perfected, to share His glorious risen life.

[1] Rev. xiv. 13.

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THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

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III

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

THE Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the keystone of the Christian hope. Take it away, and the arch will collapse, and all that it supports be reduced to a ruin. We have S. Paul's word for this: "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain."[1]

The Resurrection of Christ claims to be a historical fact. We have full particulars of time and place. It is not a myth, like the Egyptian story of Osiris. It is not an idea or a doctrine only, but an event which we hold to have actually occurred, as truly as any other well attested fact in history. I ask for special attention to the historical character of the Resurrection of our Lord, because there are in our time many Christian teachers who resolve the event into a mystery, and the risen life into a spiritual survival. In Germany there are not, I suppose, half a dozen theologians known outside their own country who

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 14.

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hold the old faith that the body which was born of the Virgin Mary and crucified under Pontius Pilate was raised to life again; and there are not wanting some amongst ourselves who follow some way along the same road of doubt as to the actual Resurrection of our Lord. Let us, then, begin by asking ourselves what evidence we have that our Lord truly and literally rose from the dead.

And first, who are the witnesses? For ourselves the immediate witnesses are the four Gospels: S. Mark, the earliest, who, according to the oldest Christian tradition, followed the account of S. Peter, whose disciple he was; S. Luke, who when he was with S. Paul in Judæa had ample opportunities of getting information from members of the Church at Jerusalem who had seen the risen Lord; "S. Matthew," or the early writer whose book is called by his name, and is probably based in fact on S. Matthew's work; S. John, who was an eye-witness, although his Gospel was not written till the last years of the first century. There is indeed a fifth Gospel witness, for the last twelve verses of S. Mark are not a part of the original second Gospel, but were added in the second century, probably from another early Gospel, to make up for the loss of the last leaf of S. Mark; or it

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may have been because the original S. Mark was left unfinished, breaking off at xvi. 8.

Now S. Mark is supposed to have written in the sixties, S. Luke and S. Matthew in the seventies and eighties, and S. John in the nineties of the first century; so that in reading these Gospels we are reading records written from thirty to sixty years after the events. It is often said, with a good deal of apparent reason, that in that interval the original story might have been encrusted with much fable and legend. It has to be remembered, however, that the sources of the Gospels are much older than the Gospels themselves. The substance, at least, of the Gospels was delivered by word of mouth from the eye-witnesses, some of whom were still living when the books were written, or who had been heard by the writers. That is doubtless what is meant by Mark being an "interpreter" of Peter, namely, that he wrote what he remembered Peter to have said. And S. Luke, you will recollect, tells us in his preface that the sayings and doings of the Lord were delivered to him and others by those "who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word."[1] It is therefore unreasonable to doubt the substantial truth of facts affirmed by all the four Gospels, on

[1] Luke i. 2.

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the ground that they were not written down immediately after the first days. They are early enough, and they are sufficiently based on earlier teaching, to demand from us belief in all the important facts of the Gospel history.

But over and above the Gospels we have another and an earlier witness, and one who was independent of the original Apostolate. I refer to S. Paul. No sober critic will deny that 1 Corinthians is his work; few will doubt that it was written in or about the year 53—*i.e.*, within a quarter of a century of the event. In this Epistle S. Paul not only asserts the Resurrection of the Lord—that he asserts or assumes in all his writings—but he gives a number of details, some of which are not mentioned in the Gospels. Among other things he says that the risen Lord appeared to S. Peter and S. James, naming these Apostles only. But Peter and James were the only two whom S. Paul, three years after his conversion, visited at Jerusalem, so that there is every reason to think that he gained his information from these eye-witnesses. If so, the witness in 1 Cor. xv. goes back to 38, within ten years of the Resurrection, and it is that of two who saw the Lord on the very day of His Resurrection.

So much for the witnesses; now for their

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witness. It falls under two heads of evidence, viz.:

1. The Empty Tomb.
2. The Appearances.

1. That the Lord was buried in Joseph's garden there is no doubt; the act of Joseph and Nicodemus was witnessed, as the three Synoptists tell us, by the women who followed Jesus from Galilee, and remained to see the last of the Master. A stone was rolled to the entrance of the tomb, and it was afterwards sealed, to prevent any interference with the body. When the women returned after the Sabbath to bring spices to the dead, the stone had been rolled away, and the body was gone. S. John adds the significant fact that the linen wraps lay there still, and that the napkin which covered the head was rolled up by itself. Evidently there had been no hasty removal; all had been done leisurely and in order.

Two explanations of the empty tomb were offered at the time. Mary Magdalene supposed that Joseph's gardener, not knowing what had happened, and resenting the intrusion into his master's new tomb, had removed the body to another place. The Jews spread the story that the body had been carried off in the night by the disciples. Neither hypothesis is possible, if the

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tomb was guarded. As for the disciples, what could they have done with the body? There is nothing more difficult to dispose of secretly than a dead man, as murderers have often discovered to their cost. Why did not the Sadducees, when the Apostles preached the Resurrection, contrive to find and produce the body? Nothing would have so surely stopped the mouths of the Twelve.

There are those who escape from these difficulties by simply drawing their pen through all passages in the Gospels which speak of the tomb being found empty—a very high-handed proceeding, which is in fact a confession of weakness. But there remains another set of facts which cannot be disputed: the appearance of the risen Lord to the Eleven and others.

The appearances of the risen Christ extended over a period of forty days. Nine are recorded, but these are probably only examples of the intercourse that went on between the Lord and His disciples during the six weeks before the Ascension. The circumstances of these visits differed widely. Two of the appearances were witnessed by individuals: one by two friends walking together; one by a group of women; five by the Apostles or a majority of them; one by more than 500 persons at once, more than half

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of whom were still living when S. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, and could therefore be produced, if needful, as witnesses of what they saw and heard. Moreover, the appearances were not mere visions, not ghostly apparitions, but appearances of a Person, who spoke at length, who ate and drank with the Apostles, bore on His body the five wounds, those in hands and feet, which shewed him to have been crucified, and the wound in the side, which identified him with Him who was pierced by the soldier's lance. And to shew that there was no doubt as to the reality of the risen body, He bade His disciples handle Him and see, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."[1] Sight, hearing, touch, all were called to witness that the Lord was risen indeed.

It must be added that these appearances were wholly unexpected by the Apostles and disciples of Christ. They knew Him dead and buried, and not a ray of hope was left to them of His return to life. The words of the women who reported the tomb empty, and the vision of angels which said that He was alive, seemed to the Eleven "as idle tales, and they believed them not."[2] No modern sceptic was ever more sure that Christ had not risen than His own Apostles

[1] Luke xxiv. 39. [2] Luke xxiv. 11.

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were, until He came and stood in the midst and spoke to them and ate with them. They were convinced by their own senses. The conviction grew, as time after time He appeared to them, until it became the ruling certainty of their lives. There is no attempt in the Gospels to hide their original incredulity. In Galilee, where they went to meet the Lord on a certain hill which He had appointed them, "when they saw Him they worshipped Him: but (the Evangelist is careful to add) some doubted."[1] So honest and truthful are the Gospel writers that they record what seemed to make against them, and this honesty of theirs confirms our confidence in the witness they bear to other facts. For the appearances, beside the witness of the Gospels, we have also that of S. Paul, who records five out of the nine.

What account is given of these appearances by some modern critics? It is not denied that the appearances took place; the evidence is too strong and manifold to permit so drastic a course. The usual method of dealing with the facts is to resolve the appearances into "subjective visions." The Apostles and other disciples honestly believed that they saw the risen Christ, that He spoke to them, ate with them, shewed them His hands and His feet and the side wounded

[1] Matt. xxviii. 17.

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by the spear, though He did nothing of the kind. Psychology will acount, they say, for an hallucination such as this. The impression left on our Lord's disciples by His unique personality, the recollection of His splendid vitality, and of the hopes which He held out of His return, did not suffer them to acquiesce in the fact of His death. They seemed to see Him alive again, to hear Him speak, to touch Him, as before the Cross, and the appearances remain to depict their imaginary experience. Now, no doubt people whose minds are stirred by a great enthusiasm can imagine that they see and hear things which correspond with their desires and expectations. But, as we have seen, the Eleven, so far from expecting the Resurrection, were plunged into the deepest despondency; their psychological condition was exactly opposite to that which sees visions and dreams dreams of hope and glory. The very last thing that any one of them would have imagined was that the risen Lord was in the midst of them, speaking to them and shewing His hands and His side. It is a false psychology which explains the appearances thus.

A recent writer in *Foundations* has improved upon this very crude conception. He thinks of the appearances as real manifestations of the

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Lord as conqueror of death, communicated to the Apostles possibly by telepathy, possibly in some other way of which at present we have no conception. But what was the nature of the victory, and how was it manifested? Not, apparently, by an actual resurrection of the dead body, but the survival of the spirit, perhaps in a spiritual body, with the power of taking the form of the present body for the purpose of convincing the disciples that their Master was still alive and at work among them.

Why all this ingenuity? Why refuse to believe the plain statements, made by eye-witnesses, that our Lord took again the body which was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary"?

But while we maintain the identity of the body which was raised with that which was crucified, there are some facts in the Gospel narrative which are not to be overlooked, and which tell us plainly that the risen body, though the same, was not under the same conditions as before death. The Resurrection of Christ was evidently no mere resuscitation. When the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son at Nain, and Lazarus of Bethany were raised by our Lord, they returned, we must suppose, to the ordinary conditions of life, and were just such as they had been before

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death. They rose to continue their earthly life, and, when their time came, to die again. Jesus Christ, being "raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him."[1] Nor did He return to His life in the world. He did not resume His ministry of preaching and healing. He did not return to His daily life with the Eleven; even to them He only appeared at intervals. He was in fact during the forty days already ascending to the Father. "Touch Me not," He said on Easter Day to the Magdalene, who would have detained Him, "for I have not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren and say unto them, I ascend (am ascending) to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."[2] One may almost say that the Resurrection and the Ascension are parts of one great event, the one beginning, the other consummating, the entrance of our Lord into His heavenly life.

If we bear all this in mind it will not surprise us to find, during the forty days, a mingling of earthly conditions with the spiritual and heavenly, a state which is neither wholly of this earth nor wholly of the heavenly and spiritual world, but (as it were) on the borderland of both worlds,

[1] Rom. vi. 9. [2] John xx. 17.

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with some of the qualities of both. Thus, to have flesh and bones, to eat and to drink, to submit Himself to be handled and felt, to speak with man's voice, to breathe upon His Apostles, to accompany the two disciples in their walk to Emmaus, to lead the Eleven out of the city as far as Bethany—all this indicates the possession of a material body, such as ours. On the other hand, the sudden appearances, and as sudden vanishings out of sight, the entrance into a room which was barred and bolted, the final rising of the body into the air and its disappearance in the clouds—all this appertains to what S. Paul calls the spiritual or the heavenly body, which is related to the body of this flesh as the blade of wheat is to the buried grain. Which of these rose from Joseph's tomb? The material body or the spiritual? In trying to answer this question, we are bound to take note of all the facts. And if we do so, we seem compelled to believe that in our Lord's case, the change of the material to the spiritual was not instantaneous, as it will be with ourselves at the Second Coming, but *gradual*; that it began at the Resurrection, and continued through the forty days, and was completed at the Ascension. We can see, I think, the great value for the Apostles and the Church of those forty days when He hovered, as it were,

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between the two worlds. How much they and we should have missed if He had gone straight from the open tomb to heaven, or had taken at once a spiritual body! In such a body He could not have shewed Himself alive after His passion by many sure proofs; He could not have spoken to the Apostles of things concerning the Kingdom of God, or given them that final preparation for their great work which He gave when from time to time He appeared in their midst. Those forty days of occasional converse with a visible Christ, yet a Christ who was rapidly passing beyond the visible worlds, what an admirable transition they were from the life with Christ in Galilee to the purely spiritual Presence which began with the Pentecost.

It has sometimes been said by Christian advocates that no event in the history of the world rests upon stronger evidence than the Resurrection of Christ. I am not prepared to say that. On the contrary, it is easy to see how much stronger the evidence might have been than it actually is. The Resurrection itself could have been witnessed by none but the soldiers on guard, and they, according to their own confession, were asleep. The appearances were limited to Apostles and disciples; no enemy, no one outside the circle of the Master's friends,

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saw the risen Christ. He might have risen, had he so willed, in the presence of a crowd, or He might have shewed Himself alive after His passion to all Jerusalem. Such evidence would have compelled assent. But that is not God's way of leading men to faith. He gives reasonable and sufficient evidences and no more. Whether the evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus satisfies or not will depend largely upon the attitude which the enquirer takes in reference to the Person of our Lord. We cannot separate the Resurrection from the Incarnation, and the sacrifice of the Cross; he who holds that Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Word, and that He died for the sins of the whole world, and redeemed human nature from the curse of sin, will find no difficulty in believing that He conquered death as He had conquered sin, and rose again. The empty tomb, the appearances of the risen Lord, will seem to him to be the natural and necessary supplement of the all-holy life and sacrificial death, and the evidence which has been given of the Resurrection would have sufficed for him, even if it had been less convincing.

So far I have spoken of the Resurrection as a fact in human history. But the Resurrection of our Lord is not merely a historical event which rests on sufficient evidence, and is the necessary

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sequel of the Incarnation and the Cross. It has for us a vast moral and spiritual value.

Of the moral power of the Cross we hear much, and too much cannot be said. The moral power of the Resurrection is less often insisted upon by preachers, or realized by Christian people generally. Yet there is much about it in the New Testament. "As Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. . . . He died unto sin once: but the life that He now liveth, He liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus."[1] Our Lord's death and Resurrection were not merely the end of one life and the beginning of another, but the end of His connexion with human sin and the beginning of a life with God and wholly unto God. And we who in Baptism are made to share His death and Resurrection must daily die unto sin and rise again to righteousness. Our likeness to His Resurrection begins here in the continual rising of the heart to God in union with the new life of our risen Lord. Elsewhere S. Paul describes the Christian experience as "knowing the power of Christ's Resurrection,"[2] the quickening, bracing sense of union with the risen life of our Lord.

[1] Rom. vi. 4, 10 *f.* [2] Phil. iii. 10.

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And S. Peter speaks of our whole life being regenerated by the hope, the "living hope,"[1] which is ours through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—not the mere hope of immortality, or of return to life after death, but the hope of living in the ages to come in the presence of God, and for God, and unto Him. That is a "*living hope,*" full of vitality and strength, making our life here a preparation for the greater life hereafter, stimulating us to all good and God-like work. It is for this moral and spiritual result of faith in the Resurrection that the Church teaches us to pray in the Collect for Easter Day:

The fact. "Almighty God, Who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life;

The moral effect. We humbly beseech Thee, that, as Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so . . . we may bring the same to good effect."

The "good desires" and resolutions of Lent are quickened into "good effect" if we believe from our hearts the message of Easter, and rise with Christ to newness of life.

Faith in the Easter message, and experience of its moral effect act and react upon one another.

[1] 1 Pet. i. 3.

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If we know the power of the Resurrection, and find ourselves quickened and moulded by the risen life, we shall not be much disquieted by the doubts which meet us in books, or in periodical literature, or even occasionally in sermons. Difficulties there are, and in a unique and supernatural fact such as our Lord's Resurrection we may expect to come across some which we cannot solve, which no man can, with our present limited faculties, explain. But difficulties ought not to be allowed to harden into doubts, nor will they do so if we ourselves are risen with Christ. We can then affirm from our own knowledge, in S. Paul's triumphant words, "Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep."[1]

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 20

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THE RESURRECTION OF THE CHURCH

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IV

THE RESURRECTION OF THE CHURCH

THE Resurrection of Jesus Christ was a unique event in the history of the world. It was His own act: "I have power," He says, "to lay down My life and have power to take it again."[1] It was a complete and final victory over death: "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more."[2] He was raised before corruption had begun: "He whom God raised up saw no corruption."[3] By one or more of these conditions our Lord's Resurrection is distinguished from any other resurrection, past or future. Those who were raised by our Lord could never have raised themselves, and, when raised, were liable to die again. The bodies of those who will rise again at His coming will, in the vast majority of cases, have not only "seen corruption," but will have long been reduced to dust.

In what way, then, is the resurrection of the dead connected with the resurrection of Christ?

[1] John x. 18. [2] Rom. vi. 9. [3] Acts xiii. 37.

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And will their resurrection be perfectly general, extending to all members of the human family who have ever lived? or will it be simply a resurrection of those who are Christ's, and who die in the Lord? And if all are to rise, in what respects will the final resurrection of the Church differ from that of those who are not Christ's? These are some of the questions we have to attempt to answer to-day. To-day I shall seek to answer these questions from the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles; but first of all, let us consider the opinions about the resurrection which were held by the Jews at the time when the Christian doctrine was preached by Christ.

We have seen that the first intimations of a resurrection in the old Testament are to be found in a post-exilic portion of Israel, and the first definite statement of the doctrine in Daniel, the latest of Old Testament books. The hope of a resurrection, therefore, was one of the latest revelations made to Israel. But once made, it struck root in the national life of the Jewish people, yet not as the property of the whole nation, nor in exactly the same form everywhere. The Alexandrian Jewish writings—*e.g.*, the Book of Wisdom and the works of Philo—shew no acquaintance with any doctrine of a resurrection, and are content to say that the righteous dead

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are safe in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them. The Palestinian writers, on the other hand, generally expect a resurrection, but differ as to its extent, some limiting it to Israel, some to the righteous, while others think of the raising to life again of all mankind, both bad and good.

There was, however, in Palestine itself a deep division of religious opinions on this and other matters. It began with the attempt of Alexander the Great to hellenize all the peoples who came under his power. A large body of Jews in Jerusalem and elsewhere fell in with his purpose, and adopted pagan customs and ways, neglecting the precepts of the Mosaic law. But another section of the people steadily refused to be hellenized, and adhered to the Law. These came to be called the Hasidim, or the "Pious"; and out of this loyal body came the Maccabean leaders who vanquished the Syrian King, Antiochus Epiphanes, and rescued Jerusalem and the Temple from pagan rule. In course of time, however, the "Pious" themselves fell away from strict Judaism. The Priesthood, which now ruled the land, became worldly and disloyal; a minority broke away from them, and were known as Perushim, or Pharisees (*i.e.*, Separatists); while the rest, who were lead by the priests, took the name of Zadokites (from Zadok, the priest of

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David's time) and Sadducees. The rupture between the two parties began a little more than a century before Christ, and, as we learn from the Gospels, it was one of the outstanding features of Jewish life during His ministry. In our Lord's time the priests and nobles were Sadducees, but the Pharisees, who were in alliance with the Scribes, or religious teachers of the time, had the ear of the people, and "sat in Moses' seat"—*i.e.*, were the recognized interpreters of the Law.

Now one of the radical differences between Sadducees and Pharisees was on this question of the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees rejected not only the doctrine of the Resurrection, which the Pharisees taught, but all ideas connected with belief in a spiritual and eternal world. As S. Luke tells us in Acts, they said "that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit."[1] They were frankly pagan, and in some respects worse than pagan, in their view of life. Our Lord, when He was brought up against their unbelief, sternly condemned it. "Ye know not the Scriptures," He told them plainly, "neither the power of God."[2] Yet opposition to Sadducean unbelief did not drive Him into the arms of the Pharisees. It would have been easy for Him to have made common cause with the Pharisees on

[1] Acts xxiii. 8. [2] Mark xii. 24.

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this point, and even to have led them in a crusade against the Sadducees; and had He done so, He would have had the great mass of the people with Him. But he was of no party; He was far above it. Nor could He identify Himself with the hard, mechanical orthodoxy of the Pharisees, even when they were on the right side. It may be for this reason that our Lord's Galilean teaching, as reported in the first three Gospels, contains so little about the resurrection. He raised the dead, He foretold His own Resurrection, He refuted the Sadducees when they attacked Him on the subject; but beyond this, the resurrection is hardly mentioned in His synoptic teaching. It is otherwise in the Gospel of S. John, where we have two important utterances, one before hostile Jews at Jerusalem, the other addressed to a faithful disciple at Bethany. To the Jews Jesus is reported to have said: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." . . . "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgement."[1] Here we have clearly *two* resurrections, one moral

[1] John v. 25, 28 *ff.*

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and spiritual, which was to follow the preaching of the Gospel, and had already begun; the other, bodily and universal, affecting all the dead, evil as well as good, at the end of time.

The second great saying on the future resurrection is addressed in private to Martha, the sister of Lazarus. Jesus had said to her, "Thy brother shall rise again."[1] Martha, who had doubtless received the doctrine of a future resurrection from the Scribes' teaching in the synagogue of Bethany, understood the Lord to refer to the general resurrection, and answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."[2] The Lord does not discuss this, but adds what throws a new light on the whole subject, and lifts it out of the groove of a barren orthodoxy: "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me, shall never die."[3]

These two passages contain Christ's great contribution to the doctrine of the resurrection. In both He *connects the resurrection with Himself*. It is *His* voice, He says in the first passage, that will wake the dead, and bring them forth from their tombs. More than this, He is Himself, He adds in the second passage, the very principle

[1] John xi. 23. [2] John xi. 24. [3] John xi. 25.

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of resurrection, of life. He "does not simply work the resurrection and give the life; He *is* both" (Westcott). To believe on Him is to live a life unbroken by death; death in its fuller sense can never touch those who are His. The resurrection, the restoration of the body, is a lesser result, which is included in the greater, in the new life of faith. Here our Lord speaks only of believers; in the earlier passage He had spoken of "all that are in the tombs." There He spoke to enemies, here to a friend. But in both places He connects resurrection *with His own person.* That is the special revelation of the Gospel; all resurrection comes from Jesus Christ, who is "the Life."

There is a third passage in S. John which I have kept to the last, because it goes further than either of these into the mystery of that union with Christ which is the condition of a deathless life. It comes between the other two, in the sixth chapter, and belongs to the teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum which followed the first miracle of the loaves. Our Lord was led to speak of Himself as the "Bread of Life," or, the "living Bread"—*i.e.*, the living personal Food, which preserves the whole of man, his spirit and his body, unto eternal life. He is Himself this Food, and He gives Himself through His Flesh and His Blood—*i.e.*, through His humanity and His

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Sacrifice. Of these He says: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise Him up at the last day." Here are two distinct benefits to be gained by feeding on Christ, *one present and one future*: such an one (*a*) "hath eternal life," even here and now; and (*b*) at the end of the present dispensation he shall be raised up from the dead in the resurrection of life. We can see, too, how the life of Christ which quickens the soul now, and will in the end quicken the body also, passes over to us. The food must be eaten and drunk, taken into ourselves, assimilated, turned into nourishment, in order that our life may be preserved unto life eternal. The process of feeding on Christ is of course spiritual; but since the body as well as the soul is to be preserved, the body receives the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and of His Blood. The greatest Christian writer of the second century, Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of S. John, does not hesitate to say: "The mixed cup and the bread, when they receive the word of God, become the Eucharist of the Body and Blood of Christ; and our bodies that have been fed by the Eucharist, after they have been laid in the earth and dissolved into it, shall rise again in due time." "Our bodies, which receive the Eucharist, are no longer doomed to

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perish, but have the hope of a resurrection to eternal life." Our own Church echoes this early Christian belief when she distributes the Bread and the Cup with the words "The Body, the Blood, of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . preserve thy *body* and soul unto everlasting life."

The Eucharist, then, is the guarantee of our resurrection to eternal life, or, as it is called by another yet earlier Christian writer, who was martyred within twenty years of the death of S. John—Ignatius of Antioch—"the medicine of immortality," "the antidote to death." It is of course the Eucharist received with the right dispositions which is all this; and it is all this, because, when so received, it is the appointed means by which we feed on Christ, and take Him spiritually into our soul, and sacramentally into our bodies, who is the Resurrection and the Life.

Most of the questions with which we started have now been answered. We have heard from Christ's own lips that all mankind will be raised, evil as well as good, though not all will rise to life. We have learned also that the "resurrection of life" will result from union with Himself, that He is Himself the Resurrection and the Life, and that this union comes through faith in Him and feeding on Him who for that purpose gives us His Flesh and Blood in the Holy Sacrament.

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There still remains one point: the relation of our Lord's Resurrection to the resurrection of His Church.

That the two things are related, and related very closely indeed, even as cause and effect, is clearly the teaching of the Apostolic age. At first the Apostles were so full of the fact of the Lord's Resurrection that the fact itself was the great subject of their preaching. "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses."[1] So spoke S. Peter on the Day of Pentecost, and such continued to be the theme of all the Apostolic speeches: "With great power," we read a little further on, "gave the Apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."[2] S. Paul carried on this witness; even at Athens he preached "Jesus and the resurrection."[3] To the pagan Festus he appeared to be guilty of no worse crime than the folly of affirming one Jesus, who was dead, to be alive. Yet the Sadducees quite clearly understood that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ somehow involved the resurrection in general. They were troubled because the Apostles "proclaimed *in Jesus*"[4]—in His case, that is, in this crucial instance—"the resurrection of the dead." Once admit the Resurrection of

[1] Acts ii. 32. [2] Acts iv. 33.
[3] Acts xvii. 18. [4] Acts iv. 1 *f.*

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Jesus, and their negative creed would break down. And they were right, though they little knew all that was involved in the Easter message of the Church.

It was to S. Paul that it was given to point out the full consequences of Christ's Resurrection. "Christ," he writes to the Corinthians,[1] "hath been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." There are two arguments here. The first is from analogy. At the Passover, on the morrow after the sabbath a sheaf of the first-fruits was waved before the Lord, in anticipation of the completed harvest. As the Paschal sheaf was an earnest of the Pentecostal ingathering, so the risen Christ was the guarantee of the harvest of all the dead, to be gathered in at the coming of the Lord.

This is an illustration rather than a logical proof. But it is followed immediately by an argument which rests on a great spiritual law. Man had, in Adam, brought sin into the world, and death as the penalty of sin. Man must in Christ reverse this, and bring in righteousness and life. As all men died representatively in the

[1] Cor. xv. 20-22.

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first Adam, so in the person of the second Adam all men must be restored to life. The second Head of the human family must repair the evil done by the first Head.

S. Paul's contrast of the two Adams savours of the Rabbinic methods to which he had been accustomed in early life, and appeals but little to the modern mind. But the principle which he urges is perfectly intelligible. Our Lord, as the Son of Man, representing humanity before God, its accepted Head and Lord, stood in all His actions for the race, and not for Himself alone. In His death all men died; in His Resurrection all rose again. The resurrection of man is guaranteed by the Resurrection of the great Son of Man, and is included in it potentially; at a future day the whole family of men will rise again actually and as a matter of fact.

I take it, then, that when S. Paul writes "In Christ shall all be made alive," he refers to the whole human race. He believed, we know from the Acts, that there would be "a resurrection both of just and of the unjust."[1] But he does not pursue the subject of the general resurrection. He just mentions it, and then goes on to speak of the resurrection of the Church, of those who are Christ's in heart and life. "Every man," he

[1] Acts xxiv. 15.

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continues, "shall rise in his own order"—in his own rank and company. He imagines the vast host of the dead moving like a great army in their regiments, and Christ, the first-fruits, at the head of all, and next to Him, all the saints who have ever lived and died, all who in the deeper sense are His; whether those who are not His, who have not His spirit, shall follow in another company, he does not stop to say. It is enough that of those who are His not one will be wanting, not one left behind, or in another company: each will, in the wonderful order of that day, take the place which is proper to him, the place for which he is fitted and prepared, in the second rank of God's great host. Christ alone will stand in the first rank, but all who are truly His will follow immediately. That is S. Paul's conception of the resurrection of the Church in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Thessalonians, an earlier epistle, he draws another picture; we see the Lord descending from heaven, and the risen dead in Christ mounting up to meet Him in the air. But it matters little how the scene is depicted; the fact remains the same: the appearance of the risen Christ will raise the Christian dead; to them belongs the second place in the humanity of the great future. Christ first, then they that are Christ's, and then, as it seems, they that are not Christ's; though over these

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last the Apostle draws a curtain which we will not try to lift.

There are two relations in which men may stand to Jesus Christ. All men, whether they recognize their relation to Him or not, are related to Him by the mere fact that they are human beings. The affinity between Christ and every man goes further back than the Incarnation; it is an affinity of man to the Creative Word. Man was made in the Image of God, and the Image of God is His eternal Son and Word. Even in fallen man the image remains, though marred and obscured; there is that in every human being who is not yet finally lost which is Divine. There is a capacity for knowing and loving God, and being like Him, in His moral nature. Thus it came to pass that the delights of the Divine Wisdom were with the sons of men before the Incarnation. Thus it was that the Divine Word stooped to take human nature into personal union with Himself. And thus it is that the Incarnate Word represents all humanity; that He tasted death for every man and rose again, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and the living; and that even the worst of men will receive from Him the gift of resurrection. Resurrection is not inherent in human nature; it belongs to man only because his nature has been taken and borne by the Word,

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who has conquered death for man. This at least every human being receives from Christ, the gift of immortality. If any abuse the gift and lose it, it is a gift nevertheless of quite inestimable price, and it is ours by the mere fact of our nature having been taken by the Son of God.

The Church stands in a further relation to Jesus Christ, and one vastly higher and more intimate. For the Church is the Body, of which the risen and ascended Christ is the Head. All men share a common *nature* with Christ; all true and living members of the Church share with Him a common *life*. They are, as S. Paul says, "one man in Christ Jesus."[1] "There is one Body and one Spirit."[2] The vitality of the Head descends into all the members, descends even to the very feet. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."[3] The Spirit of Christ is in all who are Christ's, while they are in this world, raising their thoughts and hopes, quickening their life, yielding fruits of righteousness. The body continues to be liable to death, beset with infirmities, weighing us down with the burden of the flesh. But the same Spirit of life who has renewed the heart will in due time quicken the body. "If Christ is in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin (*i.e.*, it still has to undergo death, the

[1] Gal. iii. 28. [2] Eph. iv. 4. [3] Rom. viii. 9.

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penalty of sin); but the spirit is life because of righteousness."[1] But this strange co-existence in us of mortality and life is but temporary. If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you."[2] The quickening of the soul and the quickening of the body are both the work of the same Spirit, and where one is, the other will follow; the life of the Head, the Spirit of Christ, which now quickens the souls of its members, will assuredly hereafter perform the lesser miracle of quickening their mortal bodies.

"The last Adam is a life-giving spirit."[3] We are not without the consciousness at times of His quickening power in our present lives; at times, I say, because there are very few Christians who are always on the same high level of conscious spiritual life. It is quite possible that this high level may be gained in the life after death, in that presence of Christ which makes death a gain, and not, as it seems to be, a loss. But there is something more to follow when Christ comes again. What we now have of the life of the Spirit is only an earnest of our full inheritance. We have but the first-fruits of the Spirit; we still wait, and our

[1] Rom. viii. 10. [2] Rom. viii. 11. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 45.

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friends in Paradise wait, "for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body."[1] We have the adoption so far as the soul is concerned; "now are we children of God,"[2] and the Spirit of God "bears witness with our spirits that we are"[3] such; but the body seems to be left outside the circle of the redeemed life, and while this is so our adoption is not complete; redemption does not cover the whole man. The old Greek pagan thinkers thought of the body as the tomb, the prison-house, of the spirit, as no true part of man. But that view is wholly foreign to Christianity. The body, according to the teaching of the Gospel, is an essential element in our nature; it has been redeemed; it is a temple of the Holy Ghost; it is "for the Lord."[4] Its deliverance from death is postponed, not abandoned; it will be the Spirit's last work, before the entrance into the life everlasting, to restore the body. Meanwhile the body itself is sealed with the Sacraments of grace, that it may be preserved, together with the spirit and soul, to the coming of the Lord.

Christ took our whole nature into union with the Divine, and will save it in its entirety. There will be work for the body to do in the future life as

[1] Rom. viii. 23.
[2] Rom. viii. 16.
[3] 1 John iii. 2.
[4] 1 Cor. vi. 13.

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well as for the spirit. It is another question what relation the risen body will bear to the body of this flesh. That question we will try to answer, so far as Scripture and the teaching of the Church shall guide us, the next time we meet.

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THE RISEN BODY

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V

THE RISEN BODY

"SOME one will say, How are the dead raised, and with what manner of body do they come?"[1] So S. Paul imagines an objector meeting his argument for the resurrection of the body. To the Greek mind the resurrection of the dead was unthinkable. At Athens Stoics and Epicureans heard the Apostle patiently, till he spoke of the resurrection of the Lord. Then some openly derided, and others put off the discussion to another day. At Corinth some even of the baptized denied that a resurrection of the dead was possible. Others, who were not prepared to go so far, raised difficulties. What kind of body was it that would rise? The same that had been buried perhaps a millennium ago, or another? That is the question which S. Paul sets himself to answer in the second part of his great chapter on the Resurrection. We shall try this afternoon to understand his answer. But first we must go

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 35.

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a little into the history of the subject in early Christian times.

The Apostles' Creed, as we repeat it at Morning and Evening Prayer, confesses "the resurrection of the *body*"; but as it is put to the sponsors in the Baptismal Office, it speaks of "the resurrection of the *flesh*." The latter is the original form; the former was adopted by our Reformers for congregational use, perhaps because it comes nearer to the words of Scripture. Nowhere in the New Testament do we read that the *flesh* is to be raised; indeed, S. Paul almost rules this expression out when he writes, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."[1] Nevertheless, the early Church insisted, in her Creed, and by her great writers, that the *flesh* must rise; the creed of one great Church even identified the flesh that will rise with the body we now wear, by adding "*this*"—"the resurrection of *this flesh*." And it had its reason for doing this. There were false teachers abroad in the early days who explained away the Resurrection, representing it as a purely spiritual process—the moral resurrection which came to a man when he believed and was baptized. Of this error we have a trace in S. Paul's latest Epistle (2 Timothy), where he condemns those who said that "the Resurrec-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 50.

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tion is past already"[1]—*i.e.*, that it is to be identified with the beginning of our new life in Christ when we died unto sin, and rose again unto righteousness. This error spread after the death of the Apostles, and it was in order to keep it out that the Church baptized her converts into belief in the resurrection of the *flesh*: a resurrection, that is, not of the spirit only, but of the body also. But the use of the word "flesh" in the Creed, though well meant, was not without danger, and as a matter of fact, the uneducated or half-educated, who formed the great majority of the members of the early Church, learnt from it a grossly material conception of the risen body. It was commonly thought that God would at the Resurrection bring together all the scattered dust and restore every limb, every feature, even every hair of the head, exactly as it was when the body was committed to the ground. From our Lord's words, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered,"[2] they drew the inference that not a hair would be wanting in the risen body. Nothing, they urged, is impossible with God, and He could do this thing if He would. Nor can any Christian doubt that power of God to do what He purposes; but of his purpose to raise the body in this fashion there is no evidence whatever. Yet so strong was

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 18. [2] Luke xii. 7.

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the Christian tradition on this point that it was maintained even by great writers and saints—by so great a scholar as Jerome, and, toward the end of his life, by so great a teacher and saint as Augustine. One brilliant exception there was, the great and fearless Origen. He put his finger on the answer which had all the while been written plainly enough in the Epistles of S. Paul, and from him the modern Church has learnt how to interpret this article of the ancient Creed. When the unbeliever asks to-day, "How are the dead to be raised up? With what manner of body are they to come?" the answer is ready—we all know what it is—"With the spiritual body."

The idea of a spiritual body is not altogether peculiar to S. Paul. A similar conception is found in Jewish apocalypses of the first century B.C. There the Similitudes of Enoch speak of the risen saints as "clothed with garments of glory,"[1] and as "all become angels in heaven."[2] The Apocalypse of Baruch, another Jewish book, nearly contemporary with the Epistles of S. Paul, teaches that though the righteous will rise in their own bodies, so that they may be recognized by their friends, they will afterwards be made like unto the angels, and be changed into any form of beauty and glory they may desire.[3] You will

[1] Enoch lxii. 15. [2] Enoch li. 4. [3] Baruch li. 12.

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remember that our Lord may have seemed to give His sanction to some such belief, when He taught[1] that "they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are equal to the angels, and are the sons of God, being sons of the Resurrection."

All this makes against the crude notion of a literal reproduction of the body that now is, and may lie in the background of S. Paul's thought. But S. Paul carries the revelation further; and, as his manner is, fortifies his teaching by the analogies of Nature. Let us follow his reasoning for a while.[2] I will attempt a paraphrase.

"To make a difficulty of the form of the risen body is mere thoughtless folly. A moment's consideration will shew that every spring a change hardly less extraordinary takes place under our own eyes. 'Thou fool, that which *thou* sowest (σὺ ὃ σπείρεις—the emphasis is on the pronoun) is not quickened except it die.' In the cornfield there is death before there is life. The grain dies in the ground; there is a dissolution of the outer wrappings of the seed; they are left in the ground and decomposed. Only the germ lives; the rest perishes, and out of its death issues the life of the

[1] Luke xx. 34 *ff.* [2] 1 Cor. xv. 36 *ff.*

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new plant. The same thing happens in God's field; that which He sows there is dissolved, it passes into decay, earth to earth, dust to dust; only so can the new life of the Resurrection come forth. Nothing survives of the buried body but the germ from which the new body is to be formed."

But the analogy does not stop here: there is more: "That which thou *sowest* (καὶ ὃ σπείρεις—the emphasis is now on the verb), thou sowest not the body that shall be." You do not expect to see the grain come up *as grain*. It will come in form as different from the grain that was sown as it can possibly be. There is no similarity whatever between that which you sow and that which comes up: shape, colour, habit, are all changed—a bright green, living, growing blade instead of a dusky and apparently lifeless seed. God gives the new life a form such as He willed to give it; the resurrection form of the plant follows the law of its being, a law which God imposed upon it at the beginning; the grain of wheat sending up the wheat-blade and other cereals in like manner perpetuating their own kind.

So is the resurrection of the dead. It will follow the analogy of Nature in both respects. There has been the dissolution of the dead body; there will be in due time the resurrection of a body

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wholly different from it in form and manner of life. Had you never seen a green cornfield, no effort of the imagination would have enabled you to anticipate such a result from the sowing of the seed. You are as little able now to realize what manner of body will rise from the dead. When God clothes the field of the world, in the spring-time of our Lord's Return, with the glory of the risen life, it will be the greatest surprise you have ever had. Meanwhile we know enough to enter heart and soul into the great contrast drawn by S. Paul. The body which is sown in corruption, in dishonour, in weakness, will be raised in incorruption, in glory, in power. "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

What does the Apostle mean by "natural" and "spiritual" in this connexion? Earlier in the Epistle[1] he has contrasted the "natural" man and the "spiritual," using the same words. "Natural" is not a good translation of S. Paul's word, though apparently our translators could not find a better. The original adjective comes nearer to our word "*animal*," when used to describe that which belongs to the lower life of man, the life of sense and appetite, as when opposed to the life of thought and high aspiration. Our present body is "animal," in

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.

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the sense that it is the seat of our sensations and appetites, and that on the whole it is the organ of our lower nature and not of our higher faculties, tending to depress rather than to exalt, to lower rather than to raise our ideals and our life. The risen body will be "spiritual." The latter word does not mean "made of spirit," as if the body of the risen were not to be in any sense material; that is a point on which S. Paul does not enter. It will be "spiritual" in that it will be the organ of the spirit, and no longer a burden or a hindrance to the spiritual life; in that it will express and carry into operation all the purposes and aims of the spiritual nature of man. That is all we need to know, and for this the Apostle vouches.

Let us now go back to S. Paul, for he has something further to teach us. "When man was created, according to Gen. ii. 7, the Lord breathed into him the breath of life, and 'man became a living soul.' The first man received animal life from the Creator, and communicated this lower life to all his posterity. Christ, the last Adam, the new Head of humanity, gives more than animal and physical life; He gives life in its true and highest form. The first man was of the earth, formed out of the dust; the second man is from heaven. We have all inherited the earthborn nature of Adam; we must all seek to

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bear the heavenly nature of the Heavenly Man, the risen and ascended Christ. There is progress in God's dealings with men: first the animal body, and then the spiritual; first the likeness to Adam, then the likeness to Christ. The first comes at birth, the second, in its completeness, at the Resurrection."

The risen body will complete in the saints the likeness to Christ which is the aim of the whole Christian life. The assimilation begins, here and now, in the inner man; it will end in the transfiguring of the outer man, of the body itself. "Our citizenship," S. Paul says elsewhere, "is in heaven, from whence also we look for a Saviour who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things to Himself."[1] "We shall be like Him," says S. John, "for we shall see Him even as He is."[2]

The Resurrection body, then, will be such as the glorified body of our Lord now is. It will be "the image of the heavenly" man—of the heavenly body of the Lord.[3]

You will observe that S. Paul does not say "the risen," but "*the heavenly,*" the ascended Christ. As far as we can judge from the record

[1] Phil. iii. 20, 21. [2] 1 John iii. 2. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 49.

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of the forty days during which the risen Christ remained on earth, His body was not yet wholly spiritualized. He had flesh and bones, He could be touched and felt, could eat and drink. In His case there was a reason why the transformation should be incomplete; for it was necessary for His Church that He should remain yet awhile in the world, giving proofs of His identity, and instructions concerning the setting up of the Kingdom of God in the universal Church. Whether the change was gradually going forward during the forty days, and was completed in the moment of the Ascension, we do not know, but complete it must have been when He passed into the spiritual eternal order which we call "heaven." And it is this "heavenly" body that is the image, the model, after which our future bodies are to be framed: that Body which was seen by S. Stephen standing on the right hand of God; which appeared to S. Paul himself as a blinding flash of light above the brightness of the Syrian noonday sun; which S. John saw in the vision of Patmos, and describes in terms which defy all attempts at pictorial representation. Such is "the image of the heavenly" after which the bodies of the saints are to be shaped; such is the kind of body in which the risen Christ will come.

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So the objector has his answer, and the Church has assurance of hope. The Easter message is not merely, "Christ is risen," but "We shall rise"; and yet more: "We shall rise to be like Him, to wear the image of the heavenly." It is not the Christ as He came forth from Joseph's tomb, but the Christ as He is in His ascended life, as He will be when He comes again, that we may hope to resemble. "There are," as S. Paul points out, "celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial";[1] bodies suited for life in heaven and bodies suited for life on earth. Our present bodies are "terrestrial"; they presuppose a life of the senses; they tie us to the earth, and too often make our very worship earthly. Our future bodies will be "celestial," adapted to the spiritual and eternal things in the midst of which our future life is to be passed.

This is, I think, all that Holy Scripture tells us about the risen body. It is not enough to satisfy curiosity. But Holy Scripture was not written to gratify curiosity. Nothing is revealed to us without a practical purpose. What is the purpose of these revelations about our future life? Let us try, in conclusion, to answer this further question.

In the first place, they teach us what is the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 40.

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right attitude toward the body. In some way which S. Paul does not explain, but which his words imply, the present body is connected with that which is to be. It is the seed out of which the new plant of life is hereafter to spring. We cannot pursue this analogy, or say how our present bodies supply the germ from which the risen body is to spring; but we are sure of this, that as certainly as we commit the body of a faithful Christian to the grave, so certainly will God raise up a splendid and deathless companion for the redeemed spirit. In the hymn, *Light's abode,* we sing:

> "Oh, how glorious and resplendent,
> Fragile body, shalt thou be,
> When endued with so much beauty,
> Full of health, and strong, and free,
> Full of vigour, full of pleasure
> That shall last eternally!"

The poet (who is said to be Thomas à Kempis) goes beyond the Apostle; but the Apostle does teach that this frail mortal body is to the body that shall be as the seed is to the plant that springs from it. There is enough in this thought to put us on our guard against sins of the flesh, for they gravely endanger our prospect of resurrection to life. "Guard ye the flesh," writes the earliest of post-apostolic preachers, "that ye may partake

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of the Spirit.'"[1] A life which is given over to the indulgence of the flesh cannot issue in a life in which the body will be the servant of the spirit. On the other hand, all labour now expended on the work of the Lord, all suffering patiently borne for Christ and His Church, is definitely leading up to the spiritual body. Like comes from like, wheat from wheat, tares from tares: God gives to every seed its own body; the spiritual body to those who live to the Spirit. The hymn is right when it continues:

> "Now with gladness, now with courage,
> Bear the burden on thee laid:
> That hereafter these thy labours
> May with endless gifts be paid."

Those who suffer bodily pain or weariness may well, if they are sincere Christians, take courage as they think of the Resurrection body for which suffering is preparing them. "We suffer with Christ," as S. Paul has taught us, "that we may be glorified together";[2] and the suffering body will partake in the glory. "There should be no greater comfort to Christian persons than to be made like unto Christ by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. For He himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here

[1] Clem. Rom. 2 Cor. 14. [2] Rom. viii. 17.

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with Christ." So the Church comforts the sick in her Visitation Office, and the beautiful words apply to many persons who are not lying on a bed of sickness, and are not "visited," but who carry about with them some burden of bodily pain or imperfection. This suffering, this tired-out body, let them remember, is the seed of incorruption, of a painless immortality, of an endless life.

Secondly, the hope of the Resurrection body calls us to cultivate what S. Paul describes as "the mind of the Spirit."[1] For nothing is more certain than that the spiritualizing of the mind must precede the spiritualizing of the body. It would be vain to clothe in a body adapted for the life of the Spirit a mind which was not in sympathy with the things of the Spirit. The natural man has no use for the spiritual body. Therefore those who would have the spiritual body, who would bear the external image of the heavenly, must lift up their hearts to spiritual and heavenly things. They must seek things above, where the risen Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Our Lord did not take our flesh in order to suppress or abolish any part of our composite human nature. He took body, soul, and spirit. He still has, and will ever have, body, soul, and

[1] Rom. viii. 6.

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spirit. He has not Himself abandoned any element of human nature, nor will He do away with any in us. But He will restore the proper balance in our nature; He will restore to the spirit the leadership, the preponderance in power which is its right. He will make the personal life of the soul, and the animal life of the body, both subordinate to the life of the spirit, quickened and led by the Spirit of God. He will in the end make even the body, that least spiritual part of man's nature, "spiritual"—*i.e.*, the willing and effective helpmeet for the spirit. But He will sacrifice no true part of our nature; He will preserve all in their completeness for the life beyond. He will make us "equal to angels,"[1] yet not angels; men still, but angelic men, whose very bodies are instruments of the spirit, taking their proper, subordinate, yet not unimportant, part in the eternal service of God.

It is for us to co-operate with our Lord in this restoration of our nature to its true aim as an ordered whole. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, let us also bear the image of the heavenly."[2] Both the English versions, the Authorized and the Revised, read, "We shall also bear;" but a marginal note in the Revised Version says, "Many ancient authorities read,

[1] Luke xx. 36. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 49.

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Let us also bear." In fact, the evidence for "let us bear" is far stronger than for the future, and one may wish that the revisers had accepted it, and brought back the exhortation into the text. There is a very similar difference of reading in Rom. v. 1, where the Authorized Version has "being justified by faith we have peace with God," but the Revised Version rightly reads, "Let us have . . ." It is quite in S. Paul's manner to pass from argument to exhortation, to base Christian practice on Christian doctrine. So here, I do not doubt that he wrote, "*Let us* bear the image of the heavenly." Whether we shall be accounted worthy to attain to that world, whether we shall bear our part, not at our earthly Eucharist alone, but in the eternal, heavenly Eucharist, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven in lauding and magnifying the glorious Name, depends under God on our own personal effort. We refuse the spiritual body if we refuse to live by the Spirit. On the other hand, every genuine effort to live by the Spirit brings us a step nearer to the life of the Resurrection. "He that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life"[1] both of body and spirit.

[1] Gal. vi. 8.

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ETERNAL LIFE AND SUMMARY

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VI

ETERNAL LIFE AND SUMMARY

"I BELIEVE in the life everlasting." So ends the Apostles' Creed, as we recite it at Mattins and Evensong. But in the Baptismal Office, the sponsor is asked, "Dost thou believe in everlasting life *after death?*"

The old Roman Creed of the second century ended with "the resurrection of the flesh." When "the life everlasting" first appears in a creed toward the middle of the third century, it takes the place of "the resurrection of the flesh," and was probably regarded as an alternative for that article. Later on, it followed the Resurrection, as it does now. "The life everlasting" in our present creed is therefore no doubt *the life after death,* or rather, *after the Resurrection.* The Church will be raised again, that it may for ever live, in the glorified body, with Christ in the presence of God.

We thought last week of the *body* in which we shall rise if we are Christ's. To-day we think of the *life* which we shall live in the risen body.

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But first let us deal with a conception of eternal life which we find in S. John, and which regards it as something not future only, but present, a possession which the Christian man or woman has here and now. At first sight this seems to contradict our Creed, for the Creed, as we have seen, places eternal life after death and after the Resurrection, whereas, according to S. John, it is ours while we are still on earth. "He that believeth on the Son," he says, "*hath* eternal *life*";[1] and again, using Christ's words, "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, *hath* eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day"[2]—where the present gift of eternal life is clearly contrasted with the future gift of the Resurrection. The same identification of eternal life with the present life of faith appears in S. John's first Epistle. "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son *hath* the life."[3] He has it here and now, and does not only hope for it hereafter.

But what is eternal life, according to S. John? We have the answer in John xvii. 3, at the beginning of our Lord's great high-priestly prayer. "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." The know-

[1] John iii. 36. [2] John vi. 54. [3] 1 John v. 11, 12.

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ledge of God and of Christ which comes of faith, love, fellowship, is a life which death cannot touch. And this, in its beginnings, every sincere Christian has already. It will be realized more fully after death, and yet far more after resurrection; but it begins on earth; the resurrection of the body cannot begin it, where it has not been before, but will only perfect and complete it. Our knowledge of God here is, as S. Paul would say, the first-fruits, the earnest of our great inheritance, secured to us already by the gift of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ. There is therefore no disagreement between S. John's teaching and the Creed; both are true, though they represent different aspects of the truth. S. John thinks of eternal life as already begun in the life of the Spirit which is ours on earth; the Creed speaks of the same life as perfected, after death and resurrection, in heaven. To-day we will take the Creed's view of life eternal, and consider it *in its future development,* as it will be when our nature is perfected by the resurrection of the body.

1. In the life beyond the Resurrection eternal life will still consist of *the knowledge of God and of Christ.* The partial knowledge which is ours here, S. Paul says,[1] shall be "done away." We speak and think now of the great realities of our

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 8 *ff.*

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faith as children speak and think of the things that concern their elders. The strange conceptions that children form, the crude or naïve words in which they express their conceptions, fall away from them as they grow to maturity; the man puts away "childish things." They were appropriate in childhood, but if they are retained by the adult, they mark him as of feeble mind. So, it may be, the terms and forms of our theology will pass from us; we shall need them no more. Creeds, exact definitions of our faith, dogmas, and articles of religion, are fitting and necessary now; to try to free ourselves from them is to behave like children who copy their seniors, and merely make themselves ridiculous. But the sons of the Resurrection will have reached maturity, and will no longer need the things of childhood. They will see "face to face"; they will see God in the person of Jesus Christ; they will know God in the same intimate way in which He now knows them. And as their knowledge of Him will be vastly greater than ours, so their spiritual life will be incomparably fuller. Now it is a life animated by faith and hope; then it will be a life of vision upon vision. Now we see as in a mirror, the metal mirror of ancient days, which gave a dim and broken reflection; things spiritual and heavenly are riddles at the meaning of which we can only guess. In the coming age

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the riddles of life will be cleared up and solved in the light of God. "What thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter";[1] and that full, ever-growing knowledge will be eternal life matured.

2. Eternal life is perfect knowledge of God: *quem nosse vivere*—"in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life." But *it is more than knowledge; it is* (secondly) *possession*. It is, again to quote S. John,[2] to *have* Christ, and so to *have* God; to "*have* both the Father and the Son": to possess God as our own.

Like so many other New Testament ideas, this thought runs back into the Old Testament. In the partition of the land of Canaan among the tribes, the Levites were passed over, and had no territory assigned to them, because their tribe had God Himself for its portion. The Psalmists take up this conception, and apply it to themselves. "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup. . . . I have a goodly heritage."[3] "God is my portion for ever";[4] "the Lord is my portion"; "thou art my portion in the land of the living."[5]

Jesus Christ, and God in Christ, is the portion of the Church. There is indeed a reverse to this

[1] John xiii. 7. [2] 2 John 9. [3] Ps. xvi. 5, 6. [4] Ps. lxxiii. 25. [5] Ps. cxlii. 5.

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truth, or rather a complementary truth, that the Church is Christ's portion, His particular property, His purchased possession. "Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's," S. Paul writes[1] to the Church at Corinth. But if we are His, so also is He ours. His whole Person and work is ours; He is "made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."[2] His life, His death, His Resurrection, are all ours; they are made over to us in the Sacraments; we appropriate them by faith; each of us can say, as Thomas did, when he saw and believed, "My Lord and my God." But in Him we say "our Father"; His God and Father is our God and Father also. And to have Christ for our own is to have Him who is the Life; it is "life indeed."[3] Even here a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of his earthly possessions, but in the abundant supply of the supernatural life which flows from the Head of the Church into all its true members. But the risen saints will no longer live by faith, as the just do here on earth; they will see their great possession. They will no longer draw supplies of grace from Him through sacramental channels, but by immediate contact and fellowship with the Lord. They stand before the Lamb; they follow Him whithersoever He goeth,

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 23. [2] 1 Cor. i. 30. [3] 1 Tim. vi. 19.

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and He guides them to fountains of the water of life. He is theirs, and they are His; and the mutual relation, realized and enjoyed, is the deepest, the fullest life.

3. But eternal life is not privilege only, or enjoyment; it is *service; it is work.*

We make a great mistake if we connect with our conception of Heaven the thought of rest from work. Rest from toil, from weariness, from exhaustion—yes; rest from work, from productiveness, from service—no. That abundant and increasing vitality of spirit and of body which is poured into the saints from the glorified Christ, that life from the very source of life, is not to be spent in idle harping upon harps of gold, reclining on clouds, or wandering aimlessly through the paradise of God, clad in white robes and with crowned heads. These apocalyptic pictures are symbols of a bliss which passes words; but there is another side to the picture, which is too often forgotten in our anticipations of the life to come. "They rest not day and night";[1] they serve day and night";[2] "His servants shall do Him service."[3]

The activities of the heavenly life are beyond our knowledge, as they are at present beyond our powers. From Him that sits on the throne to the

[1] Rev. iv. 8. [2] Rev. vii. 15. [3] Rev. xxii. 3.

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least of saints at His feet, all are at work. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,"[1] said our Lord. It is the law of the Divine life. It is the law of all life which is worthy of the name. *Here* work is broken, necessarily—rightly broken—by intervals of rest. God has given us the night for sleep, as He has given the day for work. And there are the longer intervals caused by sickness, or enforced abstinence from work, and the last, immeasurable interval of death. To each of us "the night cometh, when no man can work."[2] But beyond, in the age to come, there lie illimitable fields of work. Work without weariness, without rest, because there is no need of rest, and no desire for it; work which is rest and joy, the keen delight of overflowing vitality, perfect health, unclouded brain, untiring strength, absolute devotion.

And all this work is *service*. "His servants shall serve him." It is one of the best features of our day that so much time and thought are given by men and women to the "service of man." Christ served humanity: "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister";[3] not to be served, but to serve, and even to give His life for mankind. It is Christ-like to serve man. Yet to serve God, as they will serve Him in the

[1] John v. 17. [2] John ix. 4. [3] Mark x. 45.

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world to come, is greater and nobler. But let us understand what we mean by this. "Divine Service," as usually understood, means the public prayers of the Church. We inherit the phrase from monasticism, which spoke of the hours of prayer as the *Opus* or *Servitium Dei,* the "work" or "service" of God. But we are mistaken if we think of the life of heaven as worship only in our sense of the word. Worship, no doubt, it will be, *all of it,* because in that world all work will be worship, and every act will be brought into relation with God, will be a doing of His will, an offering of a free heart to Him, a priestly service acceptable to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We shall serve as priests and kings; for to serve God, as the old Collect says, is to reign. It is perfect freedom; it is royalty. To serve God without intermission in every thought and act is the highest glory, and the ultimate goal of human nature.

4. Will eternal service grow monotonous, as the ages advance? Many lives here are saddened by monotony. There is the same round of trivial duties to be discharged day by day, without any prospect of change or incident before the end. Men and women in this position become too often mere machines; their drab existence works itself out in unbroken dulness till the hour of death cuts it short. Imagine a deathless life of this kind, with

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immensely increased powers, to be employed eternally in the repetition of certain acts which at last become mechanical!

Not such is the eternal life to which we are called. It is not only a life of knowledge, of possession, of service, but a life of *unceasing progress* towards the infinite Wisdom and Goodness and Power.

There is in the world as we know it much progress which is hurtful and downward in its tendency. "Whosoever *goeth onward* and abideth not in the teaching of Christ (so writes S. John in his second Epistle) hath not God." Those are weighty words, worthy to be borne in mind in an age which attaches inordinate value to mere progressiveness. True progress is not found in breaking away from the old ways, but in abiding in the teaching of Christ and His Spirit in the Church. There is an apparent contradiction here, for *how can we abide, and yet advance?* It is a paradox, like much else in scripture; but Christian experience proves it true. Those make the best progress in religion who hold fast by the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and not those who drift away from their moorings, rudderless upon a sea of doubt.

For the saints in the world to come there can be no change in the object of their faith and hope

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and love. They have Christ, they have God, and they are satisfied. There can be no monotony in the contemplation and worship of the Infinite. Their great possession is unchangeable, but also inexhaustible; no change is possible where all is love and truth. The centre of the heavenly life is fixed and immovable, but the circumference may ever be advancing towards the centre; the saints may ever be drawing nearer and nearer to a goal which they can never reach. There may be progress in knowledge, progress in enjoyment, progress in service—a progress which at every point will open up new wonders, new opportunities, new outlooks into a greater future, and as that future unfolds itself, new and unsuspected scopes for the energies of redeemed men, new ways of fellowship with God in Christ, new companionships with the good and great of past generations, and with angelic beings who have watched and guarded us in life, and rejoiced over our repentance, and are ready to welcome us into the eternal mansions, and will share our worship and our work, our service and our joy, in the ages to come.

But may we carry the idea of time into the life beyond? And if not, how can there be progress? The true answer seems to be that which has been given by a great living philosopher (Bergson), that while what he calls "clock-time" is limited to the

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present life, "duration" continues in the world to come. That is, as I understand him to mean, although we cannot think of divisions of time, such as hours and days and years, as existing in a future life, there will be succession there, age following age, though no age, as it passes, takes from the total sum of that deathless life. Certainly this is assumed everywhere in the Bible, where the next world is called "the ages of the ages,"[1] and even once by S. Paul "all the generations of the age of ages."[2] As the ages roll by, only that other ages may succeed them, the happy saints will find themselves nearer to God and to Christ, not raised as on earth by a cross, but drawn towards the Throne by growing love and fellowship—of which there is no limit, and no end.

Let me spend the rest of our time to-day in gathering up the threads of these six instructions into one final view of the life of the world to come.

1. The immortality of the soul—*i.e.*, its survival after the death of the body—is one of the oldest beliefs in the world. It was held in Egypt some 3,000 years before Christ, and in Babylonia, before Abraham went out of Ur to the land of Canaan. Israel inherited this belief, and in some of the Psalms it is expressed in noble words which

[1] *e.g.*, Phil. iv. 20. [2] Eph. iii. 21.

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Christians can make their own. In Greece and at Rome it was part of the popular faith, but by the Christian era this belief had gradually lost its hold upon the educated classes in the Gentile world, who were, as S. Paul says, practically without hope of a future life. The Gospel restored hope, and made it for the first time a living reality. Our Lord, by His teaching and His own Resurrection from the dead, threw a bright light on the life of the future. Immortality became, in His illuminating presence, far more than a survival of the soul after death; for Christians it means the sure and certain hope of the ultimate restoration both of soul and body to a blessed eternal life with God.

2. Of the life of the soul in the interval between death and resurrection we know comparatively little. But the dark exile of the Hebrew Sheol, the gloom and dreadfulness of the Greek Hades, have been robbed of their terrors by our Lord's descent into the state of the departed. For His own faithful people He has converted Sheol and Hades into Abraham's bosom, into the Garden of the Lord. He Himself remained in Hades or Paradise, in His human soul, but for a few hours, long enough, however, to welcome the spirit of the penitent robber and to proclaim the news of His victory to the spirits in prison. But though

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He is now not in Hades, but in Heaven, He vouchsafes His spiritual Presence to the faithful departed after a manner of which we have but faint experience here; they are "at home with the Lord," they are "with Christ, which is very far better" than life on earth can be. And to be with Him, in this fuller sense, must surely be to be purged from the remains of all earthly imperfections, and to grow more and more prepared for the final life of the Resurrection which they still await.

3. Of this great hope, the hope of the resurrection of the body, we have the guarantee in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. That event is the keystone of the arch on which our Christianity depends; "if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain."

The evidence for the historical truth of our Lord's Resurrection comes to us (*a*) through the Gospels, (*b*) the witness of S. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. It turns on two points (1) the empty tomb, and (2) the appearances of the forty days.

This evidence does not compel assent; it might have been stronger. All we affirm is that it is as strong as we can reasonably expect, and sufficient, if we take into consideration the character and claim of the Person who rose. If Jesus Christ was what His character, teaching, and work declare Him to have been, it is not surprising, it

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is in accordance with the probabilities of the case, that He should conquer death. It was "not possible that He should be holden of it."

But the Resurrection of our Lord is more than a fact. It is a moral force, of which all believers are conscious. They know the power of His Resurrection, and they, apart from the external evidence, have the witness in themselves.

4. On the question of a future resurrection of all the dead the Jews were sharply divided; the Sadducean priesthood denied, the Pharisaic scribes affirmed it. Our Lord, while rebuking the unbelief of the Sadducees, could not make common cause with the Pharisees, and for the most part He seems to have said little on the subject. But three passages in S. John's Gospel give us the essentially Christian view. They connect the future resurrection with Jesus Christ. It is *His* voice which will call forth all who are in the tombs. He is "the Resurrection and the Life," and He will raise those who believe in Him to eternal life. He conveys His life to them through His Flesh and Blood, through His Incarnation and His Sacrifice, which He gives us to assimilate through sacramental channels, and by feeding upon which our souls and bodies are preserved and immortalized.

Thus far we are led by the teaching of our Lord

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in the fourth Gospel. The Spirit of Christ in S. Paul carries us further. We learn to connect our future resurrection with His. Christ is the first-fruits; the rest of us are the harvest. Christ is the last Adam, who came to repair the ruin caused by the first Adam's sin; "as all in Adam die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." This much all humanity receives from the Incarnation. But they that are Christ's, who are one with Him in faith and love and hope, who have not only a common nature with the Incarnate Son, but a common life, shall not only rise, but rise to the resurrection of life; following in their own order, rank after rank, in the great procession of the returning Christ, and entering with Him in His eternal joy.

5. But "with what body" are the risen saints to "come"? The Apostles' Creed in its original form speaks of the resurrection of the *flesh*, and this phrase is still retained in the interrogative form which is put to sponsors at the baptism of an infant. It was meant to guard the Church against the mistake of supposing that the resurrection is merely moral or spiritual, and that it is in fact "past already," taking effect at the font, and in the new life which ought to follow. The Church taught, in opposition to this error, that *the flesh* shall rise, that material organism of some kind

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will be restored to every human being at the coming of the Lord. But the word "flesh" in this connexion is open to grave misunderstanding, and in early Christian times the common belief was that the scattered dust will be brought together again and every limb and organ replaced.

It is not thus, however, that S. Paul answers the question with what body the risen are to come. "With a spiritual body," he replies; not meaning by this a body made of spirit, but a body fitted to be the companion and servant of the spirit: a body "celestial," adapted to the heavenly order, as contrasted with the "terrestrial," earthly body of our present tabernacle, our present humiliation.

"Is this incredible to you?" S. Paul seems to ask. Then look at the yearly miracle of the spring: at the resurrection body which God gives to the seed that you yourself sow in field or garden. You sow a dusky grain; part of it decays and dies, and that which lives, the vital germ of the young plant, comes up a green blade, wholly different in appearance from the seed. So God in His field will bring incorruption out of corruption, glory out of dishonour, the spiritual from the animal, life from death. The last Adam is a "quickening spirit," "the Lord from heaven." "We have borne the image of the earthy," of the first Adam; "let us bear the image of the heavenly"—in our

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spirits first, in hearts and lives lifted up to our ascended and glorified Head; and so when He returns we shall bear the image of His transfigured human form.

6. To that glorious risen life no death can come. A life in which God is all in all, which consists in the knowledge of God, the possession of God, the service of God, has no limit to its vitality, its progress, its joy. It is life indeed, life that answers fully to its name, life that satisfies all the cravings of the human spirit, which God has made for Himself. It is ours in Christ. May we all steadfastly believe this faith of the Resurrection life! May we embrace and ever hold fast this blessed hope!

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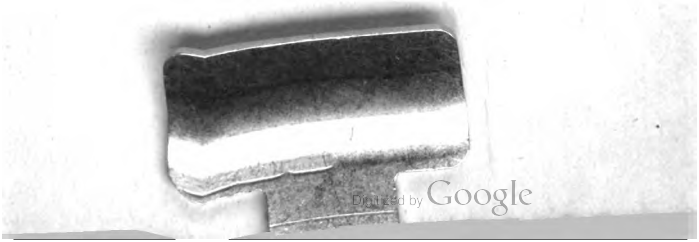
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